(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether NGOs can be watchdogs over the functioning of these power plants and whether Government propose to allow these organisations to get involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) No, Madam. Safety related details including directives of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) after periodic inspections of nuclear power plants and projects, the status of radiological safety in the operating nuclear power plants and details of safety reviews of various plants are included in the Annual reports of AERB. These reports are sent to national news agencies and newspapers. They are also published on the AERB web site (www.aerb.gov.in).

(c) No, Madam. Stomic Energy Regulatory Board, which is a functionally autonomous body, has never been soft to any installations in the matter of enforcing regulatory and safety provisions in various installations, be it in the Government sector or private sector. Members of the Board are eminent specialists. The regulatory work of AERB is being supported by specialist committees with members drawn from academic and research institutions and Governmental and other expert agencies nationwide.

In view of the above it is not necessary to allow non-governmental organisations as watchdogs over the functioning of nuclear power plants.

Setting UP an Institute of Japanese Studies in Bangalore

2989. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of Communications and Information Technology be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need for IT exports to Japan in view of the large potential;

(b) whether large exports of IT to Japan could be achieved through exposure to the Japanese language;

(c) whether a proposal in this regard has been under consideration of the Governments of India and Japan; and

(d) if so, what is the present status of the proposal and by when Government's approval is expected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is felt that language has been one of the biggest constraints for increasing our IT exports to Japan and that dissemination of the knowledge of Japanese language could play an important role in development of Japan as a highly potential market for Indian IT exports.

(c) and (d) The Department of Commerce, Government of India through Electronics & Software Promotion Council (ESC) in collaboration with Japanese counterpart JETRO has launched a scheme under Language Related Market Access Facilitation Initiative (LRMAFI) to train Indian IT professionals in Japanese language. Under the scheme the financial assistance will be provided to any exporter or IT students to pursue the course in Japanese language. All expenses will be reimbursed by ESC up to a maximum of Rs.10,000/- per exporter. The Institutes extending the course in Japanese language are IITs, IIMs, RECs, IGNOU, BITs and deemed universities.

Interconnections on Cheaper Rates

†2990. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sent any proposal to VSNL to reduce its international rates and to provide interconnections at cheaper rates;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) VSNL's reaction thereon;

(d) whether Government-owned telecommunication companies are planning to go to other international call service providers who are providing cheaper service than that of VSNL;

(e) if so, by when a decision is likely to be taken in this regard; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.